expansion in its installed capacity on or after 24.12.1997, exemption under notification Nos. 32/99-Central Excise or 33/99-Central Excise both dated 8.7.99 is not available to Ashok Paper Mill. Regarding Digboi refinery, a copy of the recommendation dated January, 2001 from the Ministry of Petroleum has been received in the month of July, 2001. However, the exemption is available either to new units or to units that have undertaken substantial expansion on or after 24th December, 1997.

Adverse impact of voluntary retirement scheme on customer service

†1013. SHRI RAMA SHANKAR KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of such employees who have been retired under voluntary retirement scheme and the category to which they belong to;

(b) the payment made by the Banks under this scheme; and

(c) whether any adverse impact of this scheme has been experienced on the customer services, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) As per latest available information 99452 employees have been relieved by the Public Sector Banks under the Voluntary Retire Scheme. Category-wise details are as under:—

Officers	43144
Clerks	44701
Sub-Staff	11607
Total:	99452

(b) An amount of Rs. 10,293 crores has been paid by the banks towards *ex-gratia* and other retiral benefits to employees relieved upto 31.3.2001.

(c) Banks have informed that generally there has been no deterioration in the quality of customer service.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.